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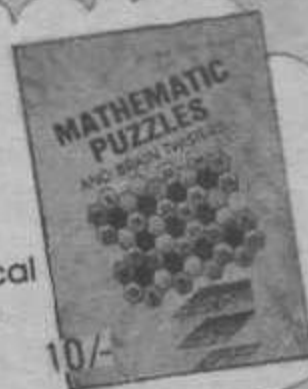
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Q. Which is India's National Bird?

A.

Q. The Sunderbans in West Bengal are famous for which animal?

A.

Q. The Common Langur is a monkey that is also named after a famous

character in the Ramayana. Who is the character?

A.

Q. In which South Indian state is the Bandipur Tiger Reserve?

A.

Q. The little Rann of Kutch is famous for a wild animal. Which is it?

A.

Q. Below are the names of four wildlife sanctuaries. Name what each is famous for.

A. Gir :
Kaziranga :
Nagarjunasagar :
Bharatpur :

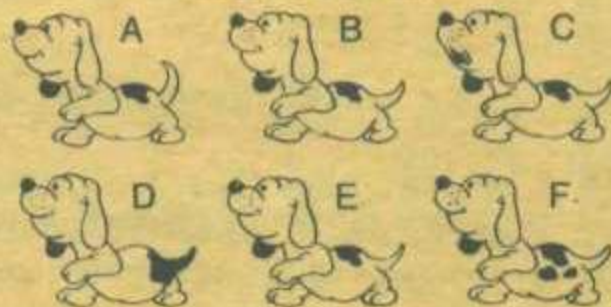
Name:

Address:

Date of birth: Age:



SPOT THE TWIN



Which two puppies match each other?
Answer : B and E

Meet the winners of the King Quiz for January.

First Prize : Pramod Kumar Dixit, Bombay.

Second Prize : 1. Aditya Avasarala,
Vishakapatnam
2. M. Sharath, Kurnool

Third Prize : 1. CH. Ram, Madras
2. G.H. Kulkarni, Dharwar.
3. Master Srihari, New Delhi

And here are the winning answers :

Festival of Lights : **Diwali**
(or Deepavali) • Ganesh Chaturthi
is popular in : **Maharashtra**
• Festival of Colours :
Holi • Durga Puja
is popular in :

West Bengal • Town in Karnataka
famous for Dussehra : **Mysore**
• The harvest festival of each
state : Onam : **Kerala**; Baisakhi : **Punjab**;
Pongal : **Tamil Nadu**; Bihu : **Assam**

PS. The King would love to know you.
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- * THE ROYAL SEAL: We travel into an era of bravery and intrigues, chivalry and treachery—with fascinating characters

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like Chanakya and Chandragupta. The classic through pictures.

- * Yet another witty episode from the life of Tenali Rama—again through pictures; a memorable legend, a bunch of refreshing stories and all the other features.

**GOLDEN WORDS OF YOKE**

उपकारिणि विश्वन्धे शुद्धमतौ यः समाचरति पापम् ।
तं जनमसत्यसन्धं भगवति वसुधे कथं वहसि ॥

Upakārini viśrabdhe śuddhamatau yaḥ samācarati pāpam
Tam janamasatyasandham bhagavati vasudhe katham vahasī
O Mother Earth! How do you tolerate a treacherous fellow
who betrays an unsuspecting pure-minded benefactor?

—The Hitopadeshah

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Controlling Editor:
NAGI REDDI
Founder:
CHAKRAPANI

THE RAMAYANA

Sage Valmiki's immortal epic can be divided into two major parts. The story till Rama's victory over Ravana and his return to Ayodhya with Sita and his coronation as the King constitute the first part. Events that took place thereafter constitute the second part. The second part ends with Sita's disappearance into the womb of the Earth from which she had once emerged, followed, years later, by Rama's departure from the world.

Many scholars believe that the second part was not written by Valmiki, that it was added later. Even so, it has been accepted as an integral part of the Ramayana. Our serial will cover this part too.

Thoughts to be Treasured

You will find that God is always by the side of the fearless.

—Mahatma Gandhi

NEWS FLASH



A SCIENTIST AT SEVEN!

In the U.S.A. an annual contest takes place to judge the best invention of the year. The first prize in a recent contest goes to Sachin Patel, the seven-year old Indian student in a Texas school. He has planned a giant satellite with a mirror that would reflect sunlight on the earth in the winter, warming up any region. It will also produce electricity.

AN UNUSUAL CONFERENCE

At Savognin (Switzerland) took place the Second International Triplets Convention and the first International Quadruplets Convention. There were 43 sets of triplets, five sets of quadruplets and a single group of quintuplets. They compared the pleasures and pains of looking duplicates of one another.



A NEW ANIMAL

It is not new on earth, but new to man. We did not know that such an animal existed. It is named Golden Bamboo Lemur. It is a furry, large-eyed creature 80 cm. long weighing about 1.2 kg. which loves to move about at night. Like men and apes, it has flexible hands and feet. It is found in Madagascar.

A HOUSE UNDER THE SEA

A three-room house has been set on the ocean bed near the Virgin Islands. Scientists will work here to study the ocean at its depth.



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with a professional / executive
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DID YOU KNOW ?



The great writer Oscar Wilde had a strange fancy. He enjoyed evening walks around Strand, London, drawing a dead lobster, tied to a string, along.

A whole town in southern Tunisia, named Dairat, is entirely situated inside a single mountain.



Dr. Julius Towler (1811-1886) of Geneva, N.Y., simultaneously taught mathematics, philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, physiology, literature and medicine.

Alexander Adam (1741-1809) of Edinburgh, Scotland, taught in a High School for 48 years. He could recall not only the name, date of birth and the year of admission of every student of his, but also the marks the student obtained in his subject in different tests.



A small South American tropical fish named Piranha is the world's most ferocious fish. A few of them can strip a creature to its skeleton in minutes.

A banyan tree can have up to 320 adventitious roots.



STORY OF

RAMA



—By Manoj Das

(Rama's triumph over Ravana put an end to the war. Sita was rescued. She emerged from fire unscathed.)

RAMA'S CORONATION

A quiet dawn broke out over Lanka after a long time. The tired Vanaras, free from anxiety and fear, bathed in the sea for a long time. No doubt, they now began to remember their colleagues who had sacrificed their lives in the battle. But Vibhishana, the new king of Lanka, was

an ideal host. He treated them to delicious dishes and let them wander freely in his island abounding in fruits. He did his best to make them happy.

It was a beautiful morning. Rama, after his bath, was greeting the golden sun rising from the sea when his eyes met with



the luminous vision of Lord Shiva. The great God blessed him and disappeared. Then he had a glimpse of the spirit of his father, King Dasharatha. Surprised, Rama bowed to him.

"O Rama, I have not been in peace on account of your travails even though I have been dwelling in heaven. The gods have revealed to me who you are. You took birth as a human being in order to rid the earth of the menace of the hostile demons. You have fulfilled the task. Now you should devote your time to ensure happiness, knowledge and prosperity for your subjects. The period for

which you were to remain in exile, is over. You must return to Ayodhya forthwith and be crowned as the king," said Dasharatha's spirit.

"Father, indescribable is my joy at your sight. Pray, be kind enough to pardon Mother Kaikeyee," Rama pleaded with his father's spirit.

"I pardon her," said the king's spirit calmly, before it disappeared.

Next to come into Rama's vision was God Indra—ready to grant him whatever wish he expressed. Rama requested him to bring back to life all the soldiers who had died in his



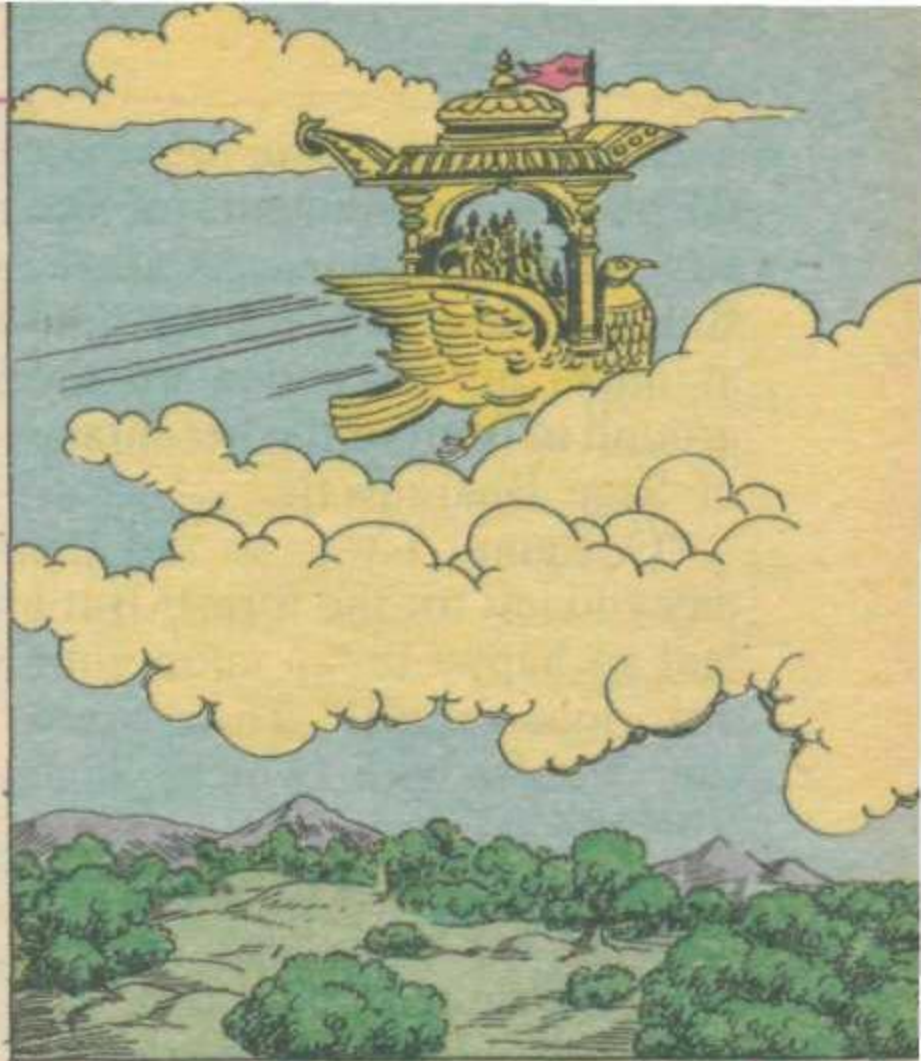
cause.

Indra said that it was not easy to resurrect the dead. However, since he had offered to grant any boon, he fulfilled Rama's wish. In a short time all the dead Vanaras and bears sprang to life—as if woken up from a deep sleep.

Vibhishana was making preparations for Rama's comfortable stay in Lanka. But Rama was eager to return to Ayodhya. "I'm afraid, my younger brother, Bharata, is leading an austere life, shunning all luxuries, because I have been deprived of the joys of the palace. I must hasten to put an end to his remorse and regret," said Rama.

"I understand your anxiety, O Prince, and I am happy to inform you that you will not be required to travel all the way back to Ayodhya on foot. Pushpak, the flying chariot of my brother Kubera, which Ravana had usurped, is here. It can carry you to your destination in a day!" disclosed Vibhishana.

Rama was happy. The wonderful chariot, bejewelled and dazzling, was made ready in no time. Not only Rama, Sita and



Lakshmana, but also Vibhishana, Sugriva and Hanuman, who desired to witness Rama's coronation, boarded it.

The chariot flew in the north-eastern direction. It crossed the sea and then flew over ranges of hills and valleys and hamlets. Rama pointed to Sita, who sat thrilled, the places memorable for them, associated with their joys or anguish. From the clouds they saw the Rushyamuk hills, Lake Pampa, the hut they had themselves built now lying deserted, the river Godavari, the hermitages of sages Agastya, Sharabhang and Atri, among other places and institutions.

At last, on the horizon flashed the monuments of the city dear to Rama, Ayodhya. But, instead of proceeding there at once, he descended on the ground in front of the hermitage of Sage Bharadwaja.

"O Rama, I was so sad the day you left for the forest! But I feel so happy today upon your victorious return!" These were the words with which Sage Bharadwaja received Rama and he requested him to spend the night in his hermitage.

Rama agreed. The next day he asked Hanuman to go to Bharata as his messenger. "Give Bharata the news of my return

and mark his reactions. Normally people who remain in pomp and power for long, grow an attachment for them. Should you observe even a flicker of sadness on Bharata's face at the news of my arrival, I will like to go back to the forest happily, leaving the throne for him for good," Rama said in the way of briefing Hanuman on his mission.

But what did Hanuman see? He was amazed to learn that Bharata did not even lie in the magnificent royal palace. He camped in a hut on the river Gomathi on the outskirts of the city, closer to the forest. He had



grown emaciated, because, while he worked hard for the people's welfare, he took little food and little rest. At intervals between works he kept gazing wistfully at the road leading towards the forest, in the hope of seeing Rama. He was growing more and more restless since the end of the fourteenth year of Rama's exile.

Hanuman's heart was filled with love for Bharata. He gave him the good news. Bharata embraced him but could not speak for a while because of excessive joy.

The news spread as fast as the breeze. In a short time Ayodhya became festive. Bharata proceeded to welcome Rama at the head of a grand procession in which the queens of Dasharatha, the ministers, the priests

and the nobility participated. They were followed by a large number of people and elephants and horses.

Their union was the most delightful occasion in the lives of all who participated in it or witnessed it. Rama was back in the palace. Soon took place the coronation that had been suspended for fourteen years. The enthusiasm and joy which marked the event had never been known before.

Rama wanted Lakshmana to become the crown prince. But he declined the offer with great humility. Hence Rama gave the position to Bharata.

The golden age began in the life of Ayodhya, the land of hoary antiquity and illustrious monarchs.

—*To continue*



THE REWARD DIVIDED



At the beginning of his career in the court of the king, Tenali Rama often found it difficult to pass through the gate. The chief sentry and his deputy always insulted him.

One day the king and the members of the royal family were enjoying a dance inside the palace. The king had asked the sentries not to let anybody in.



Tenali Rama tried to walk in calmly. But the chief sentry gave him a push and his deputy gave yet another push.

"You two are real heroes. You deserve to be rewarded!" observed Tenali Rama as if he was much impressed by the push he received!



"Ramal! You are the chap who receives rewards from the king. Nobody gives us any reward!" said the chief sentry with a sigh.



"Let me in. I shall happily give you whatever reward I receive this time," said Tenali Rama. "And the other half to you!" he told the deputy sentry. He was let in.

Tenali Rama straight entered the stage and stood on his head, his legs up! The dancer stopped bewildered. The audience was surprised.



"What's this? Drag that chap out of the stage!" shouted the king. The royal bodyguards rushed upon Tenali Rama and brought him before the king.



"My lord, I'm sure you'll reward the lady who is performing the dance. Should you not reward me for my performance?" pleaded Tenali Rama.

"I will," said the king. "You will receive a reward of a hundred lashes!" He asked his guards to do the needful.



As the king grew inquisitive, Tenali Rama told him everything. The sentries were whipped fifty lashes each. Never again did they harass Tenali Rama.



"Thank you, my lord. I have promised to give half of the reward to the chief sentry and the other half to his deputy. They let me in because of my promise," said Tenali Rama.



TAMING THE TIGER

A tiger declared himself the monarch of the forest of Sompuri and he did anything he liked. All the creatures of the forest were disgusted with him. But nobody could do anything about it. The tiger would slap or kick anybody who came before him. To maim and injure the weaker creatures became a habit with him. "Why am I king if I can't do this?" he said gleefully.

In a cave half way up a hill lived a mother jackal with her

baby jackal. "I must go and play down in the valley," said the little jackal.

"No, my son, that is the place where the tiger takes a stroll when he suffers from a headache—and he catches headaches often!" said the mother.

"Why should we not drive the tiger away from our forest?" asked the little jackal.

His mother grew grave. "My son, never say such a thing before the others. They will





take you to be mad!" said she.

The little jackal was not convinced. "I mean what I say, mother. I know that the tiger is quite strong, but that strength is only in his muscles. And muscle is not the only source of strength. We have our brains, haven't we?" he argued.

"These new generation jackals are brazen!" commented the mother.

One day the little jackal sneaked away from the cave and began romping round the valley. But he stopped when he saw the tiger coming. He picked up a string of rope and stood on two legs and held it against his

chest, leaning on a tree.

"Hey you, what are you doing?" asked the tiger.

"Your Majesty, I'm trying to tie myself to this tree!" said the little jackal and he added, "but it is so difficult to do it! Will you kindly help me?"

"You audacious chap! How can your monarch serve you? But that is a different matter. First, tell me, why you must tie yourself?" asked the tiger.

"Your Majesty, just now the spirit of this tree told me that if I do so, I shall get rid of my headache once for all!" said the little jackal, lowering its voice.

"I see!" commented the tiger thoughtfully. "All right. I'll tie you. Tell me if you really get any relief."

The tiger tied the little jackal to the tree. The little jackal shut his eyes while the tiger waited focusing his eyes on him.

Hardly two minutes had passed when the little jackal opened his eyes and exclaimed, "What a relief! What a relief!" He looked up and said, "Thank you, the spirit of the tree!"

The tiger's eyes brightened, "Little jackal, I too am suffering from a headache, a bad one at that. Will you please tie me to

the tree?"

"Your Majesty, it may be difficult for me to do it alone. Can I call for my mother's assistance and the assistance of some other jackals?" asked the little jackal.

"Call them saying that it is my order!" said the tiger.

The jackals were called. They tied the tiger to the tree as firmly as possible. "Keep your eyes shut," said the little jackal.

Then, turning to the other jackals he said, "Now, call all the creatures of the forest and also run to the nearby forests and invite all the tigers to come and witness this spectacle, what we the jackals have done to His Majesty!"

"What's all this? Release me!" shouted the tiger.

"No, Sir, you must pay for

your snobbery. You know, we can stone you to death now. But we won't do that. We will be happy if you only leave this forest," said the little jackal.

"I will leave this forest. Just untie me!" pleaded the tiger.

"Who knows? Let all the creatures and all the other tigers come and see you," said the little jackal.

Hundreds of creatures gathered to see the situation. Then came a few respectable tigers from the neighbouring forests. They hung their heads in shame.

"All right, all right, untie him and he will go away!" said the senior-most tiger.

The tiger was set free. Indeed, he ran away at lightning speed, never to be seen again.

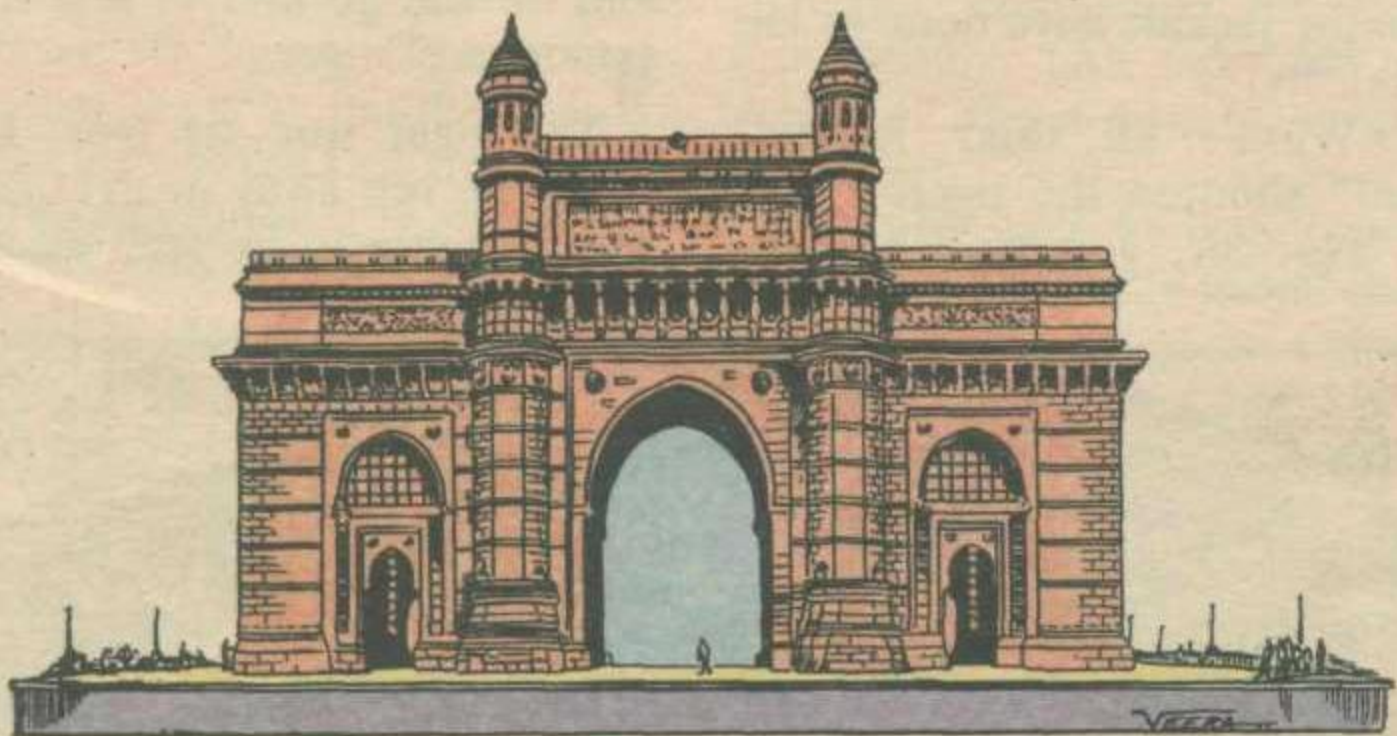


THE GATEWAY OF INDIA

You cannot miss this magnificent stone-gate if you pay a visit to Apollo Bunder in Bombay. It stands on the sea and it must have looked more impressive when it was built in 1911, because there were then few high buildings along the shore.

It was built to welcome King George and Queen Mary. This British royal couple then happened to be the King and the Queen of India too. The monument, designed according to the traditional architecture of Western India, now welcomes those who come by ship.

Two other attractions have been added to the site: one is a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji. The other is a statue of Swami Vivekananda.



To make a Heart Beat Again

By Dr. R. Jagannath

Uncle Ram was telling the children how to find out whether the heart was still beating.

Kumud looked a little worried. "If the heart has stopped beating, that is the end of it, isn't it uncle?" she asked.

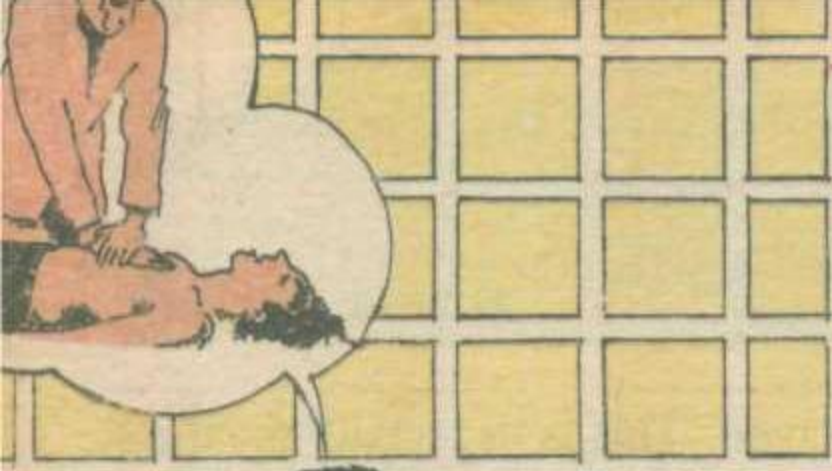
Uncle smiled at her reassuringly. "We said that if the heart stops beating for a few minutes, the man dies, but if it can be made to beat again within two or three minutes, his life may be

saved. This is especially so, if a healthy heart has suddenly stopped because of an accident such as an electric shock, poisoning, drowning, exposure to extreme cold or even sudden fright."

The children listened with rapt attention.

"A heart that has stopped may be made to beat again or revived, by certain methods. When we see a victim lying motionless and unconscious, we check immediately whether the





heart is beating. If it has stopped, we make the person lie on his back on a firm surface and give a quick blow on the lower part of the middle of his chest. You can make a fist and strike with the softer edge of the fist. This may sometimes start the heart-beat again. If it does not, we have to try to revive the heart by putting rhythmic pressure on it. This method is called the cardiac massage or massaging the heart."

"Can this be done outside a hospital, uncle?" Vinod wanted to know.

"Yes, we can and must do it

when necessary, wherever we can make the victim lie on his back on firm ground. It is done like this—the first-aider must kneel by the side of the victim and place the heel of one palm on the lower part of the victim's chest, in the middle. Then on top of this hand he must place the heel of his other palm, and press his hands down with his body-weight, in a rhythmic way. He can use his body-weight better if he keeps his elbows straight and not bent."

"How fast should it be done uncle?" asked Kumud.

"The pressing and releasing should be done about once a second, without taking the hands off from the victim's chest. Now Kumud, can you show me how to do it?"

Kumud made Vinod lie on the floor and started showing her uncle how the cardiac massage is to be done.

Uncle Ram helped her to take the right position. He said, "For the pressure to reach the heart itself, one has to press down on the chest-wall so much that it actually moves a little in and out each time. This can be done only by pressing on the heel of

the palm and not on the whole palm, and by keeping the elbows straight. If the victim is a child or a very thin person, one needs to use less pressure to move the chest-wall. If it is an infant, pressure with a thumb or two fingers may be enough. During your practice now, you merely show me how to do it, without pressing with your weight to move the chest-wall."

Then it was Vinod's turn to try the method of cardiac massage on Kumud. After a while, he paused and turned to his uncle. "How long should we continue to do it, uncle?" he asked.

Uncle Ram said, "If the heart is not revived within half an hour of starting the massage, it is unlikely to recover. However, when possible the massage should be continued till the heart starts beating again or the ambulance arrives or the victim reaches the hospital. Remember, the massage should be started immediately after the heart stops; if it is delayed by more than three minutes after the heart stops, it will be of no use."

Kumud asked, "If we succeed



in reviving the heart, can we feel the pulse again, uncle?"

"Yes," said uncle. "Once the heart starts beating after the cardiac massage, it may continue to beat on its own, especially if it was previously a healthy one. However, it is safer to keep a close watch on the pulse, so that the cardiac massage may be started again if necessary."

"What if we don't reach the victim within three minutes after the heart stops?" Vinod asked his uncle.

"Then perhaps it is too late for a first-aider to do anything. Suppose you reach the spot of



an accident and find that the victim has no pulse; if it is a quiet area you put your ear firmly to the chest and can't hear the heart-beat. Then you have to judge by the circumstances whether you are already too late or not. If you happen to be nearby while the accident takes place, you may be able to start the cardiac massage within three minutes of the heart's stopping. If you think that it is already more than three mi-

nutes after the heart has stopped, there is no point in your trying to revive the heart."

"Though the technique of cardiac massage needs some training and practice, reviving a heart is so urgently needed to save a life, that anyone nearby should not hesitate to do it."

Uncle Ram paused and the children stirred in their seats. They now realised what can be achieved by an efficient first-aider in certain emergencies.

Professor: Why are you not writing?
What is your problem?

Student: Schizophrenia.

Professor: Are you suffering from it?

Student: Yes, sir, from its spelling.



BHIMA'S MISSION

It was soon after the Mahabharata War. King Yudhisthira tried to set the affairs of his vast kingdom to order, with the help of his able and trusted brothers.

But he saw that because of the earlier misrule of the Kauravas and also because of drought, famine had struck a remote province of his kingdom. A number of people would die unless foodgrain was sent to them immediately.

There was no surplus food in any other region of the kingdom

for supply to the famine-stricken province. A sage told Yudhisthira in confidence, "There is one way to solve the problem immediately. Kubera, the god of Wealth, has a secret grain house in the Himalayas. If you appeal to him, he may spare a part of his collection for your needy subjects."

The sage also told Yudhisthira how to locate the secret grain-store. Yudhisthira became hopeful. He asked Bhima to proceed to meet Kubera.



Bhima was not quite enthusiastic about it. "One who hoards anything, is bound to be miser by nature. How to expect any sacrifice from him?" This was the question raised in his mind. But he obeyed his elder brother and proceeded to meet Kubera.

With the clue given by the sage, it was easy for him to reach the grain-store. Luckily, Kubera was present there. But what Bhima saw dampened his spirit. Kubera himself sat sifting sands and pebbles from a sackful of grain. It appeared, there were very little grain, but much sand in that sack.

"The person who owns more wealth than anybody in the three spheres—the sphere of gods, that of men and that of demons—is labouring to rescue a sackful of grain from sands! So greedy is he! How to expect any donation from him?" Bhima asked himself. In fact, he felt so disgusted that he was about to return without talking to Kubera.

But Kubera's eyes fell on him. The god stood up and exclaimed his joy and stepped forward to receive the visitor.

Bhima was pleased, but he took some time to get over his reluctance to tell Kubera the



purpose of his visit. But once Kubera had been told about it, he called out to his assistants and ordered them to carry bagsful of rice to the famine-stricken area, on hundreds of carts.

The chief lieutenant of Kubera said mildly, "But a patch of road leading to the plains is so muddy that it will be difficult for the carts to move on that. It may take some time for us to bring enough sand to cover that muddy patch."

"We don't have any time to lose. Throw as much grain as necessary on the mud so that the road looks dry and the carts can proceed," said Kubera.

His order was obeyed.

Bhima stood stunned.

"What are you wondering about, O Prince?" asked Kubera.

Bhima did not hide anything. He spoke how he had lost hope

of getting the necessary help from after seeing him taking the trouble to recover a few grain lost in sands. Now his surprise was great at Kubera's decision to use grain for sand!

Kubera smiled and said, "Grain is valuable. Nothing worthy should be ignored—however small or little. It is the single grain which goes to make a heap of grain. But, after all, why to treasure grain? To feed the hungry. There is a time for everything. No use sending grain to people when they are dead! Grain in that case will be no better than the sand. Hence, while collecting, we must be careful not to lose anything. While giving, we must be as free as God!"

Bhima returned, not only successful in his mission, but also educated.





THE MIRACLE

Hemgiri was a village close to the forest. There was no other village nearby. The people of Hemgiri lived peacefully and more or less happily.

But a time came when their happiness and peace were shattered. A gang of bandits made the forest its home. The gang ransacked the houses of the few wealthy villagers, but harassed everybody. They would suddenly invade a villager's garden and pluck his vegetables. He and his neighbours would stare on helplessly.

"There is no other go for us than to migrate to some other place," the villagers told one another. A young man named

Subal was asked to look for a suitable site.

Subal went to the headman of the next village and told him of their problems. Said the headman, "My friend, there are wide grounds around our village. Your people are welcome to settle down on these grounds. But that will hardly solve the problem. The bandits will come and strike here, when they will not find you there!"

"What is your advice? What should we do?" asked Subal.

"I am not wise enough to give you any advice. Let us meet Swamiji. He may help you to get over your problem," said the headman.

"But who is the Swamiji?" asked Subal.

"He is a hermit who lives on a distant hill. He pays visits to our village once a year," answered the headman and he led Subal to the hermit.

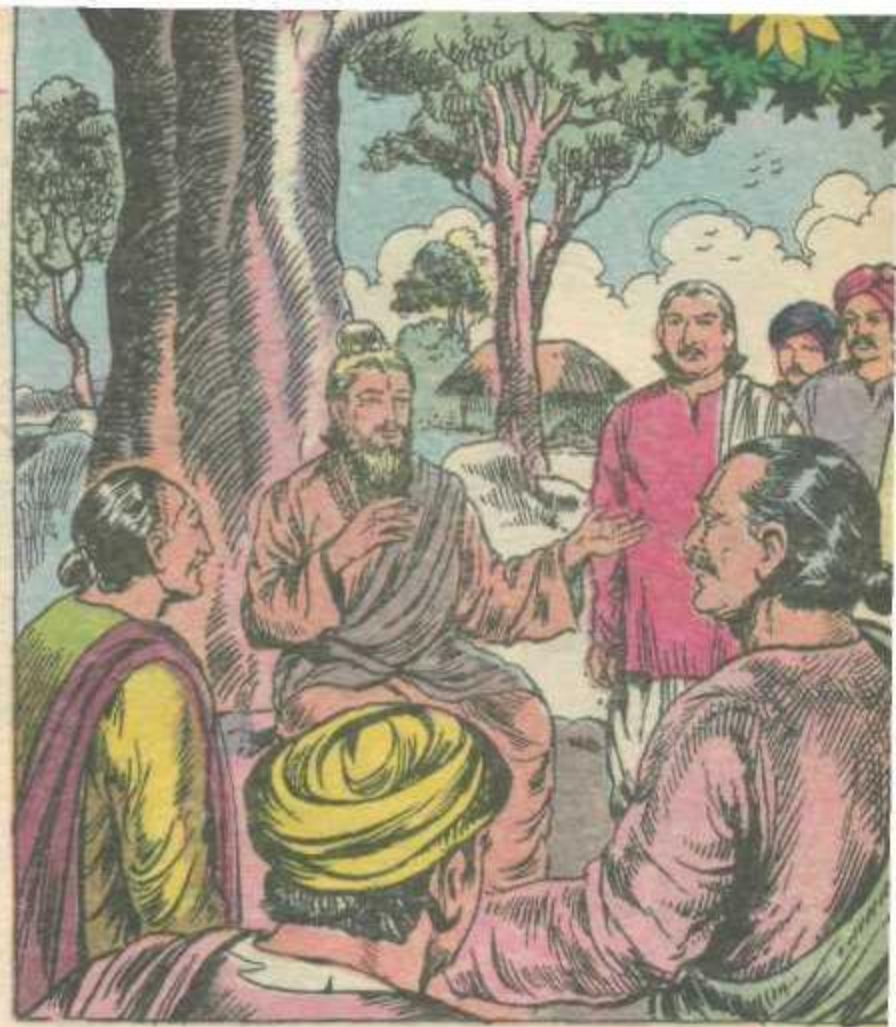
The hermit gave a patient hearing to Subal. "Let me meet the people of your village," he said. Subal and the headman led him to Hemgiri.

The villagers thronged around him. "You must face the bandits. The bandits cannot outnumber you. All of you, together, must give them a fight," said the hermit.

The villagers listened to him in silence. Then one of them said, "Swamiji, the bandits are a ferocious lot. How can we the naive villagers face them? Can you make us brave by the magic of your power?"

The hermit shut his eyes and sat in silence for a minute. He then said, "Yes, I can give you power. Who is the weakest man among you? Let him come to me."

There were hurried discussions among the villagers. "Where is our Timid? Must be hiding behind his wife. Call



him!" These were the words which reached the hermit's ears.

While the people were talking among themselves, the hermit asked Subal, "Who is Timid?"

Subal said, "Well, we have almost forgotten his real name. He is called Timid because he never does anything without his wife's permission. There—he stands behind his wife."

The hermit shouted, "Silence!" The crowd fell silent. He looked at Timid and said, "Hello, young man, come here!"

"No, don't go! Why, of all the persons, is he calling you?" his wife instructed him in a low but firm voice.



All the people laughed.

"Young man, I'm calling you because I see something very special in you. Will you not come to me?" said the hermit affectionately.

Timid slowly came forward and reached the hermit.

"Friends, can you laugh at him any more? Can't you see that he is no longer a timid fellow? He responded to my call despite being asked not to do so!" said the hermit in a resounding tone.

No doubt, the people were surprised. The hermit had powers—they felt sure.

The hermit now whispered to

Timid, "My boy, this is a golden opportunity for you. Till now the villagers looked upon you as the weakest and the most timid man in the village. Now, if you can emerge as the bravest man in the village, in a minute, will that not be a miracle?"

"Yes, sir, that will be a miracle," agreed Timid.

"Now, stand erect and look at the crowd and announce to them that you will lead them in their battle against the bandits," advised the hermit.

Timid hesitated. The hermit whispered to him once again, "My son, God will be with you. Think of the glory that is coming to you. Do as I say."

Timid faced the crowd, stood erect and raising his right hand, said, "Let us not fear the bandits. God is with us. We will fight them. We will lay down our lives, if necessary, but not flee like cowards!"

The crowd stood stunned. The man whom they considered to be the weakest of all is calling them to act with courage!

Subal stepped forward and told the villagers, "Friends, what more miracle is necessary to assure us of our victory? If



Timid can become so brave in no time, what about us?"

"We will fight the bandits!" shouted the villagers in a chorus. They hugged Timid. "Let us call him *Senapati*—the Commander!" said the hermit. "And his wife will be the commander over the womenfolk of the village. I know that she is a brave lady. Otherwise she could not have kept such a brave husband under control!" he added.

Thereafter the hermit inspected the village, found out the manner of the bandits' raid.

He organised the menfolk and equipped them with stout sticks. He told the women where they should be when the bandits come and how they should throw on them bucketfuls of water mixed with the powder of the itching plants.

The bandits came two days later, in the evening. They got the beating of their life! The villagers attacked them with sticks and unnerved them with shrieks and shouts. The loudest voice was that of the 'commander' and the most shrill voice was raised by his wife.

A Guardian: How many students are there in your college?

The Principal: About one in every twenty.

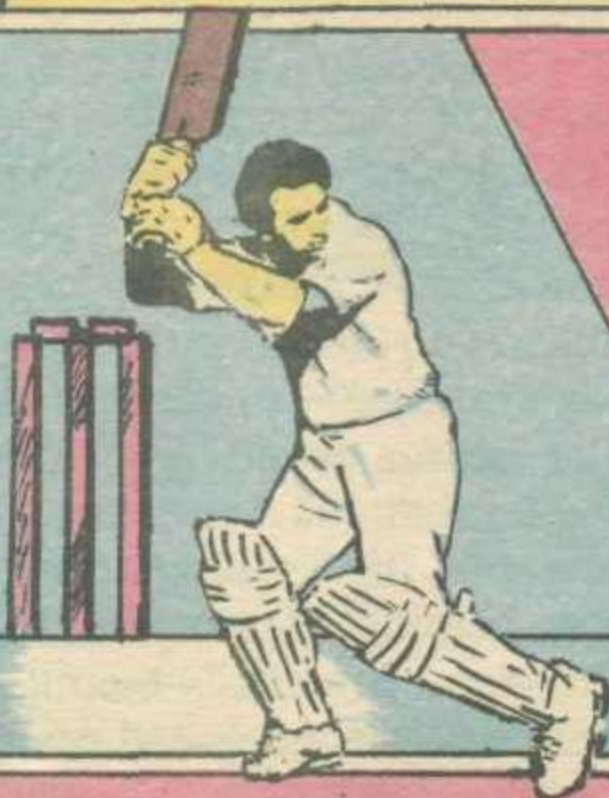


WORLD OF SPORT



EURO CUP

THE FIRST BATTLE FOR THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP (LATER KNOWN AS THE EUROPEAN CUP) WAS FOUGHT IN MAY 1956, AND WAS WON BY REAL MADRID WHO WENT ON TO WIN FIVE TIMES IN A ROW



10,122 TEST RUNS

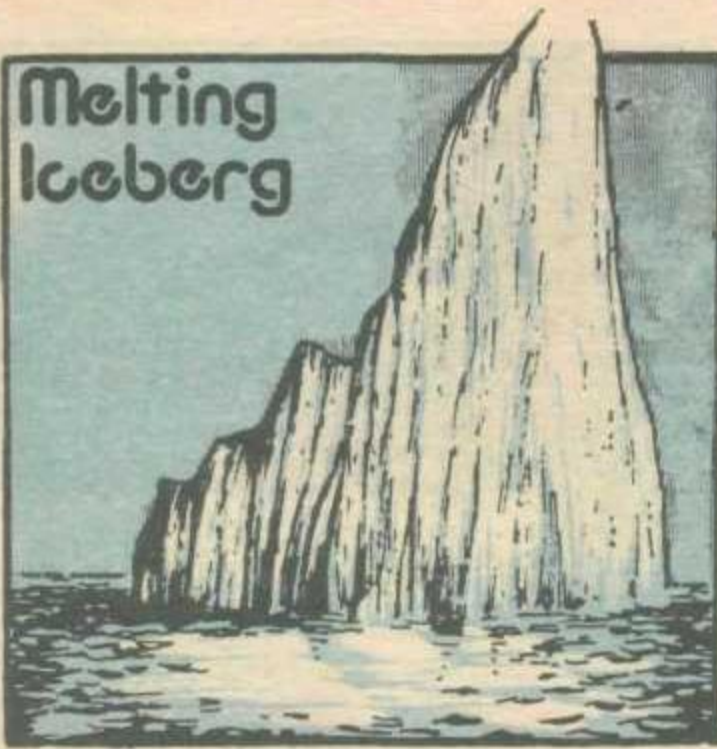
THE GREATEST NUMBER OF RUNS SCORED IN TEST CRICKET IS 10,122, MADE IN 214 INNINGS BY SUNIL M. GAVASKAR—PLAYING—FOR—INDIA BETWEEN 1971 AND 1987.

THE RICHEST SPORTSMAN

IN 18 YEARS AS A PROFESSIONAL BOXER, MUHAMMAD ALI IS SAID TO HAVE EARNED 56-MILLION DOLLARS—MAKING HIM THE WORLD'S RICHEST SPORTSMAN.



Melting Iceberg

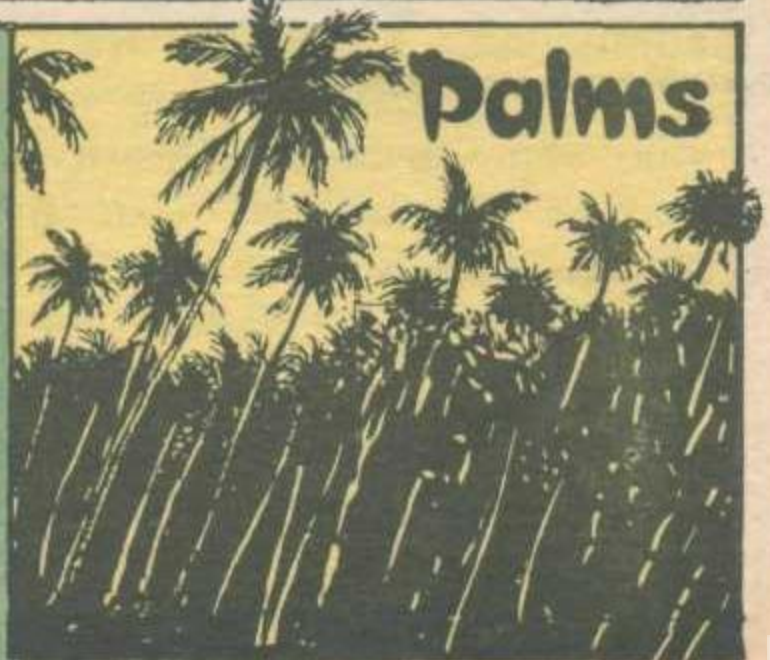


ALL ARCTIC ICEBERGS MELT WITHIN THREE WEEKS OF ENTERING THE GULF STREAM.



A TSUNAMI IS A GIANT WAVE CAUSED BY AN EARTHQUAKE. THE HIGHEST RECORDED TSUNAMI APPEARED OFF ISHIGAH I ISLAND IN 1971. IT WAS 278 FT (85M) HIGH

THERE ARE 2,800 SPECIES OF PALM TREE, MOSTLY IN THE TROPICS, BUT TWO SPECIES ARE NATIVE TO EUROPE.



Palms



THE WELL WITHIN

Not far from the city of Ujjain, on the banks of the river Sipra, was the Ashram of Sagar Dev. He was a sage and a teacher of great repute. Seekers came to him from many parts of the country.

A time came when the sage was no longer in a position to enrol new students. If the number of students increases, it will not be possible for him to give proper attention to each seeker. He decided to restrict new admissions. He kept strange conditions before young men who came with the desire to become his students. "Can you change the course of the river? I'll take you as my student if you can do that," he told one. To another he said, "There is a goldmine in this forest. Can you find that out? If you can, I'll take you as my student."

No wonder that the seekers would go back disappointed.

Once two friends from a distant town arrived in the Ashram, on their way to some places of pilgrimage. They were Anand and Vidyashil. Anand was a scholar. Vidyashil followed him with the hope that a scholar's company will teach him much.

The two travellers spent three days in a guest-house of the Ashram. Anand decided to enrol himself as a student of the sage. He met the sage and told him about it.

"I can take you as my student only if you can dig a well on this rocky ground," said the sage pointing his finger at a spot which looked extremely hard.

"Sir, I was not only a student at the famous University of Nalanda, but also a teacher

there. Some of my students are doing fine as teachers. I wanted to become your student in order to learn a few things which you seem to know well. Why should I dig a well?" asked Anand with surprise and displeasure.

"Well, that is the condition you have to fulfil if you are to learn anything from me," said the sage and his attention went over to something else.

Anand was annoyed. He began packing up. "I know that Sage Sagar Dev wanted to avoid me. It is because he fears that one day I may grow more famous than him!" he told Vidyashil. "Come, let's go!" he said again.

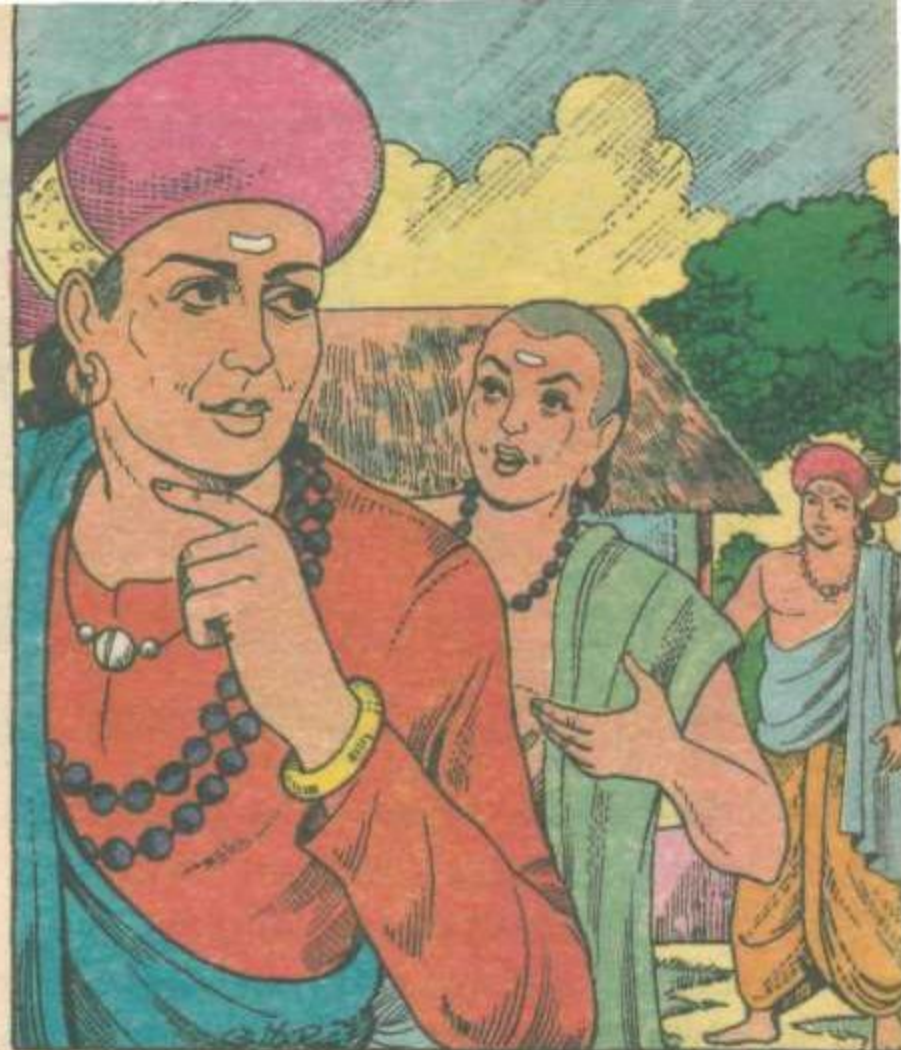
"My brother, I am thinking of staying on here. I'll try to become his student," said Vidyashil.

"What nonsense do you speak! Are you ready to dig a well?" asked Anand.

"I'll try," replied Vidyashil calmly.

"You've grown crazy!" commented Anand. Then he went away.

Five years later Anand visited the Ashram once again, while returning from some distant place. He was amazed to see



that Vidyashil was still there.

"I have finished my studies. The sage has written a letter to the king recommending me for a post in his court. But the sage has permitted me to stay here for a few more days for my practice of yoga," Vidyashil informed Anand.

"But how could you dig the well?" asked Anand.

"Soon after you left, I took up a spade and began digging the ground. I had hardly scratched the rocks when the sage came near me and asked me, 'Do you believe that you can dig a well?' I replied, 'I don't know. But since you have set forth the



condition, I'm sure there is some meaning hidden in it. If I am to trust you as my guru, how can I doubt your wisdom in asking me to dig the well?' The sage asked me, 'How long will you try?' 'As long as I can,' I replied.

"The guru led me into his hut and put some questions to me. I

answered them to the best of my ability. He told me, 'You have faith and patience. They are qualities which will go a long way in making you a good student. You need not dig a well. The well of knowledge is within you. I accept you as my student.' I bowed to him and stayed on."

Anand sat speechless.

Judge: Inspector, you say that this gentleman was drunk. I understand that he was on his hands and knees in the middle of the road. But that does not prove that he was drunk!

Inspector: Right, sir. But this gentleman was trying to roll up the white line painted on the road!



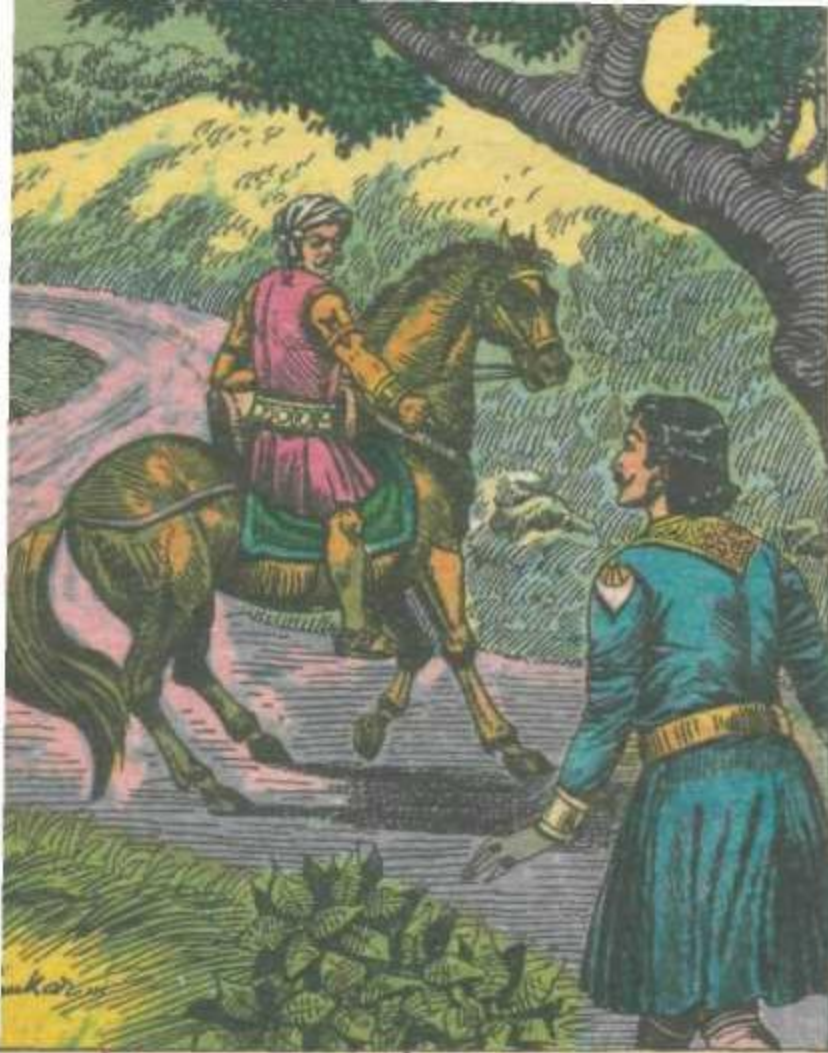
New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire

WHO IS A FRIEND?

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of the roars of thunder and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I'm sure someone whom you consider your friend has inspired you to undertake this risky work at this unearthly hour of the night. But who is a friend and who is a foe? In no time a friend can turn into a foe and a foe into a friend. Well, let me tell you a story in





order to explain my point. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief.”

The vampire went on: King Dharmapal of Ratnagarh was a kind and just ruler. He was very popular with his subjects. But he did not know that his general was an ambitious man and he was conspiring with a few greedy courtiers to overthrow the king and capture the throne himself.

One night the conspirators suddenly surrounded the inner apartments of the palace. At the point of swords, they drove the king, the queen and their son

into a room and locked them up there.

Then the general proclaimed himself the king. It was announced that whoever murmurs against the change will be hanged. The people were stunned.

But the general did not know that the room in which the royal family had been imprisoned was open into a secret tunnel. The other end of the tunnel reached the centre of the forest.

The king alone slipped into the tunnel and came out of it in the forest. He began walking towards the kingdom of Saptagiri. He had gone a few yards when a rider galloped towards him and said in a hoarse voice, “Stop, you traveller! Hand over to me the necklace and the rings you are wearing. Know that I’m Vikat, the bandit!”

The king had heard of Vikat the bandit who was harassing the villagers living near the forest. In fact, he was about to send his army to comb the forest in order to capture him. But now he did not utter a word and quietly took out his necklace and his rings and handed them

over to the bandit. Then he smiled and resumed walking.

"Wait," said the bandit. "I'm surprised that instead of showing any sign of distress you smiled while giving away your valuable things. Who are you?"

"I'm Dharmapal, the deposed king of this land," said the king and he narrated how his general had proved treacherous towards him. Then he said, "My general stabbed me on the back. But you had the courage to appear in front of me and to plunder me. You are superior to him. I smiled when this idea came to my mind."

The bandit got down from his

horse and greeted the king and said, "My lord, I along with my gang, am ready to come to your rescue."

"Thanks. If I need your help, I'll send for you," said the king and he went away.

He had walked for an hour when he saw a demon lifting a boar, perhaps with the intention of eating it. The boar let out piercing shrieks.

The king, undisturbed, passed by the demon.

"Stop, you traveller. For the first time I find a man who is not afraid of me. Who are you?" asked the demon.

The king introduced himself





and told the demon how he had been deprived of his kingdom.

"You are a brave king. Injustice has been done to you. I'm ready to fight the usurper, your general," said the demon.

"Thanks. Should I need your help I'll send for you," said the king and he went away.

He crossed the forest and reached the palace of King Virbahan of Saptagiri. For three generations past, there was enmity between the dynasties of Dharmapal and Virbahan. Even then King Dharmapal met King Virbahan and reported to him of his misfortune. He then said,

"I seek your help to overthrow the usurper. The only promise I make is, if ever you are deposed by anybody, I will come to your rescue."

King Virbahan showed him great courtesy. Within a day he mobilised his army. King Dharmapal led the army of Saptagiri against his treacherous general. Since the usurper did not enjoy any popularity either with the soldiers or with the people, King Dharmapal easily overthrew him and captured him with all the other conspirators.

There was great jubilation in the land as King Dharmapal was back on the throne. He brought the administration to order.

A few days later he went into the forest and met the demon and said, "Demon, my people are afraid of entering the forest because of your presence here. Travellers fear taking the forest road. You must leave this forest."

"What if I don't?" asked the demon haughtily.

"This forest belongs to my kingdom. As the king, I order you to leave it. Your not obeying my order will amount to your challenging my author-

ity. I have to protect my authority," said the king as his hand went to rest on his sword.

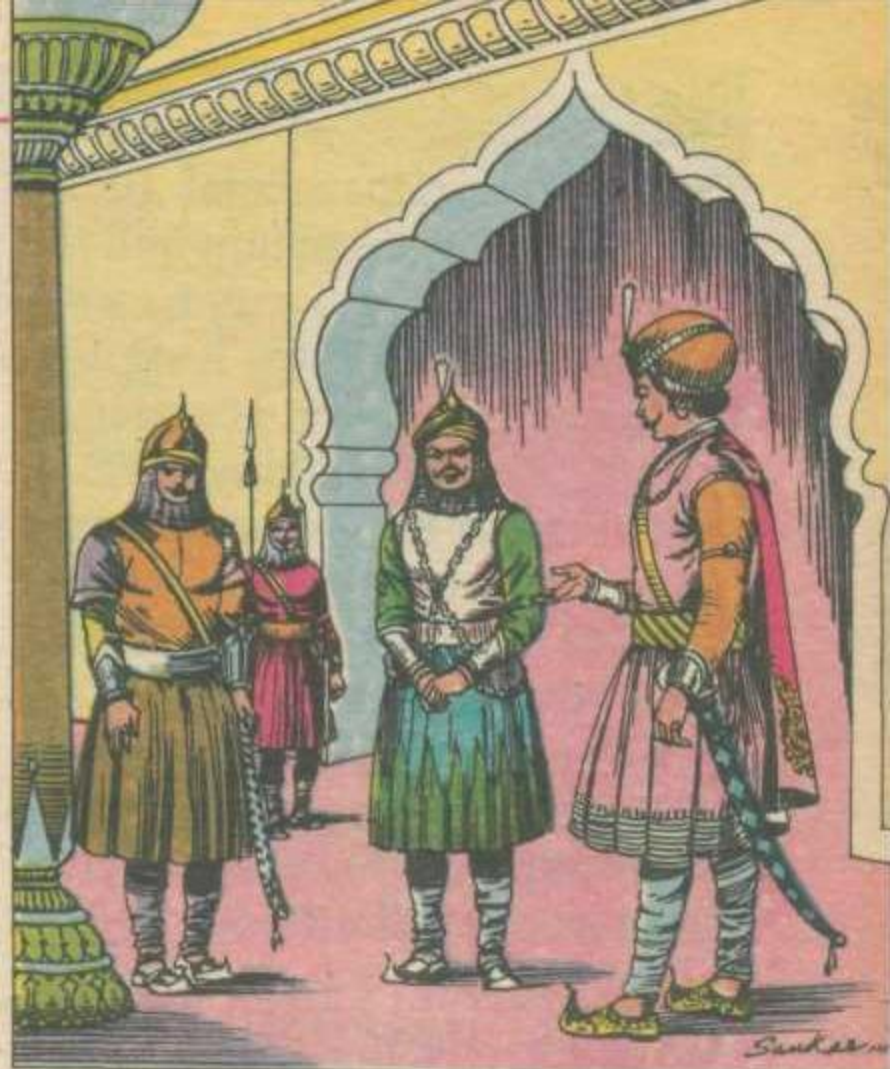
"Hm!" snorted the demon. He looked at the king and his sword and then left the forest.

The very next day the king sent his army to search an area of the forest to locate Vikat the bandit. The army found out his hiding and arrested him. His followers surrendered.

A month passed. The king of a smaller kingdom, Pushpanagar, appealed to King Dharmapal for help as his kingdom had been seized by King Virbahan of Saptagiri. King Dharmapal immediately proceeded to Pushpanagar and fought valiantly against the invaders and took King Virbahan his prisoner.

When the two kings stood face to face, Virbahan told Dharmapal, "So, you have not forgotten the enmity that prevailed between our two kingdoms for long!"

"Your Majesty, I want to forget it. Can't we take some concrete steps in that direction?" said King Dharmapal, while setting the royal prisoner free.



"What steps do you have in mind?" asked King Virbahan.

"I spent a day in your palace. Your daughter took care of me. How much I wish that I had a daughter like her. Well, you know, I have a son, who, I believe, is worthy of your daughter. Can't we have them married?" said King Dharmapal.

King Virbahan looked delighted. The two kings embraced each other. The wedding was a grand affair.

The vampire paused for a moment and then demanded of King Vikram, "O King, how

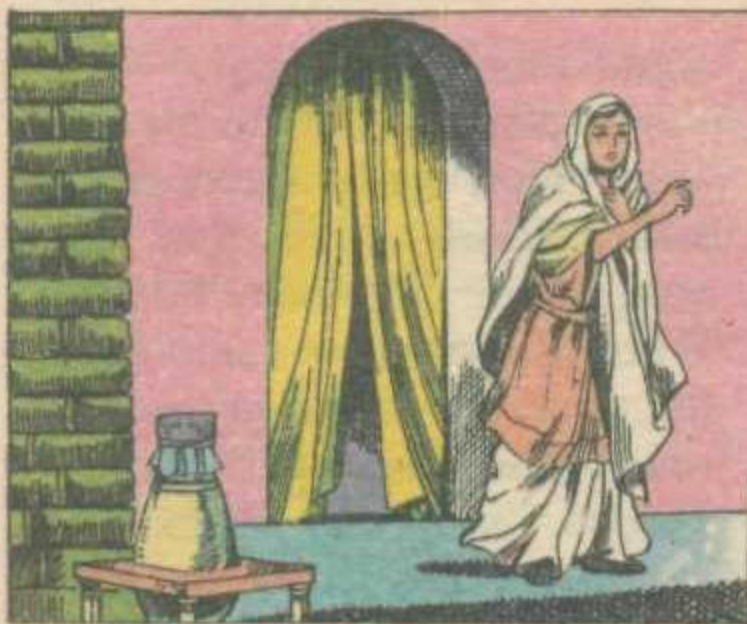
could King Dharmapal be so rude towards the bandit and the demon? What is worse, he went against his benefactor King Virbahan and took him prisoner on behalf of another king! Was it not a sign of his ungratefulness? How is it that he was considered a good and just ruler despite such blemishes in his character? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

Answered King Vikram forthwith; "When King Dharmapal met the demon and the bandit, he was destitute. But as soon as he recovered his throne, it became his duty to free the kingdom from the menace of the demon and the bandit. He had never promised them safe conduct! Then comes the ques-

tion of Virbahan. It is the duty of a king to go to the rescue of another king in distress. The very principle which Virbahan followed in coming to Dharmapal's rescue, was also followed by Dharmapal when he went to the rescue of a smaller king. Besides, it was necessary for him, for diplomatic reasons, to prove that he was not a weak king. Otherwise everybody would have said that but for King Virbahan's help, he could not have recovered his kingdom. In any case, he more than made up for his conduct towards Virbahan in the battlefield by proposing permanent friendship with him."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his reply than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





A TALE FROM PERSIA

THE GREAT ASTROLOGER

Ali was a poor man, but he had married the daughter of a rich landlord. To put it correctly, the gentleman was a rich landlord; had he not fallen into bad days, Ali could not have married his charming daughter.

But Ali's wife, Lija, was a sensible woman. She adjusted herself to Ali's lifestyle without murmur. However, she could not forget only one luxury. That was to enjoy bathing in the public bath known as hammam.

One day she had just entered the hammam when the keeper of the bath rushed in and announced loudly standing at the entrance, "Ladies, please leave the pool at once!"

Lija was looking forward to a refreshing bath. She had to get out immediately. She felt deeply insulted. "Why must we leave?" she asked the keeper at the

gate. "The chief court-astrologer's wife is coming for a bath!" replied the keeper curtly.

As Lija and the other women were going out, they saw the proud lady entering the hammam. She did not even care to look at them.

Back at home, Lija told her husband, "Can't you become an astrologer?"

"What? Astrologer? What do I know of astrology that I should become an astrologer?" said Ali with surprise.

"Something tells me that you can become an astrologer. Why don't you try? If you don't, I better go away to my parents—not for ever—but for a year!" said Lija.

Ali knew that Lija expressed strange whims at times. He said, "All right, all right. Let me try."

He collected some old papers



and drew on them figures and pictures as he had seen with professional astrologers. Then he went to the hammam and sat on the verandah.

Just then the princess was about to enter the pool. She took off her diamond ring and gave it to one of her maids and said, "Keep it with you. This is a bit loose for my finger. I cannot risk losing it in the pool."

There were several holes on the old wall of the hammam. The maid tucked the ring in one of them. She had just combed her hair and some strings of hair were in her hand. She tucked them with the ring, so that she

could identify the hole.

The princess bathed for a full hour. Her maids were singing and playing hide and seek around the hammam building. When the princess came out of the pool, she asked her maid to return the diamond ring.

Alas, she was a forgetful maid. She scratched her head, but could not remember what she had done with the ring.

"Produce my ring immediately, or I'll teach you a lesson for being so careless!" shouted the princess in anger.

"O Astrologer, can you tell me where the ring is?" the maid asked Ali in her despair.

Ali cast a blank look at her. "What do you see?" asked the maid, quite unnerved.

"I see a hole and inside it hair!" Ali, who too was quite unnerved, said. What he said referred to a hole on the maid's dupatta and the hair seen through it.

The maid at once remembered the hole where the ring lay. She was overjoyed. She told the princess about the astrologer's feat. The princess gave him a handsome reward and went home.

"Good heavens! What a

windfall!" mused Ali. He had just stepped into his house and had handed over the reward to Lija when the king's messenger called on him. "You are summoned by His Majesty the King," he said.

His heart beating rapidly, Ali presented himself before the king. "We are amazed at your knowledge of astrology. You are appointed as one of our court-astrologers!" said the king.

There was no question of Ali turning down the king's offer. He shifted to a big mansion. Lija was happy, but Ali lost the peace of his mind. What will

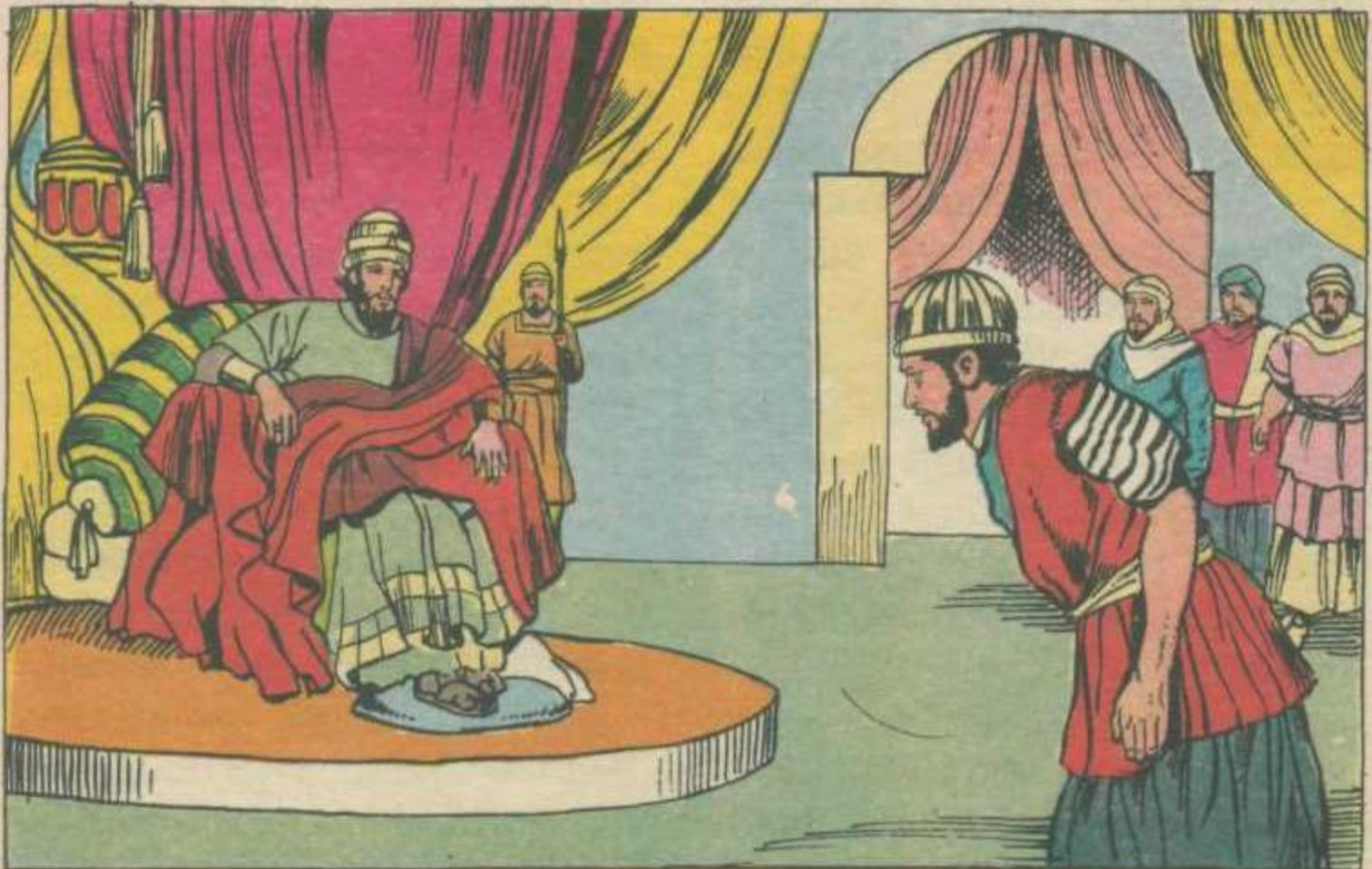
happen if he is asked to prove his knowledge again!

His fear became true. A burglary took place in the palace. The king first asked the chief astrologer to trace the stolen property—jarfuls of gold. But the clever astrologer said, "My lord, I am always at your service. Why not test the new astrologer?"

"That's a good idea. Ali! Find out the stolen property!" said the king.

Ali saw dark. But he must say something. "My lord," he said, "I need ten days to do the needful."

"That's all right," said the





king.

Ali was looking like a man about to be hanged when he reached home. "Now, your zeal for making an astrologer out of your foolish husband is going to cost him his life after ten days!"

"Ten days is a good enough time!" she said. "Let us enjoy the royal facilities till then. Here, I'm putting ten date-palms in a box. I shall give you one fruit every evening. The day the box becomes empty, that very night we will escape to the neighbouring kingdom."

Ali said nothing.

The burglars who belonged to the city knew that Ali had been

asked to find them out. They were anxiously waiting to see if Ali would really succeed. On the tenth day, the leader of the gang stealthily entered Ali's house and tried to hear the conversations of the couple.

"Here is the tenth one—the biggest one at that. Finish it off!" said Lija, handing over the last date-palm to her husband.

It so happened that there were ten burglars in the gang. The leader now had no doubt in his mind that he had been found out. He was also sure that he cannot escape. He fell at Ali's feet and said, "Kindly save our lives. We will surrender the booty to the last coin." He then gave Ali a lot of money. Also, he and his men brought all the stolen money to Ali's house.

Next day Ali carried the recovered property to the king. "My lord, my science says that the culprits should be pardoned in this case. Otherwise some misfortune will befall us," said Ali.

The king pardoned the burglars. He was so happy with Ali that he ordered his salary to be more than the chief astrologer's!

But Ali's anxiety and fear too doubled. What if he fails next time? He could not sleep in

peace. Any moment the king may ask him to solve some other mystery and his bluff may be exposed!

He thought and thought and then hit upon an idea. He must feign madness. The king will not expect any service from a lunatic! The money he had already got from the king and the burglar chief should be enough for two of them to live comfortably for the rest of their lives.

He poured water on himself. Then he rushed into the king's private chamber. The king was discussing some important issue with the minister. Ali, in order to prove that he was really mad,

dragged the king out of his seat.

The very next moment a pillar collapsed on the seat, smashing it. Had Ali not dragged the king away, he would have died.

The king stood speechless for sometime at this unexpected happening. Ali too forgot that he was to act like a mad man. Then the king hugged Ali and said, "O my saviour! I would be dead but for your timely intervention! What a great astrologer you are! And what a great well-wisher you are that you should jump right from your bath, all wet, to save me from a catastrophe! You are my chief astrologer and the chief courtier





from this moment. I shall bestow upon you the most valuable reward I have ever given to anybody!"

"My lord, I have to reveal one thing to you. I had told the Lord of Astrology that if I can save my king from death, I shall never practise astrology again. It is with this heavy sacrifice that I could save you!"

"Wonderful, wonderful, my

friend! You need not practise astrology again. Even then you are my chief astrologer and my chief courtier! You will receive a royal salary all your life!" exclaimed the king.

When next time Lija went to the public bath, the former chief astrologer's wife was bathing. But the hammam-keeper sent a woman attendant to drag her out of the pool so that Lija can have all the water for herself!

CHOICE IS THE PROBLEM

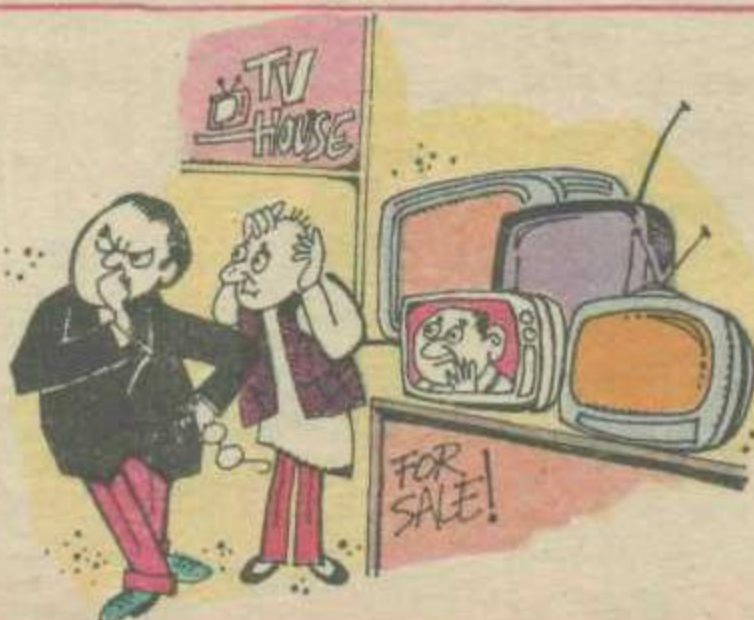
Professor Dhundhar entered the TV Shop.

"What kind of set would you like to have? Black-and-white or colour?" asked the salesman.

"Colour TV, of course, only..."

"Any problem sir?"

"I can't decide which colour to buy!" replied the absent-minded professor.





THE ROYAL SEAL

(1)

(Story of Mudra Rakshasa)

Long long ago, the kingdom of Magadha was ruled by a famous king named Sarwarthasiddhi. He had his capital at Pataliputra. His success as a ruler was greatly due to his able minister, Rakshasa.

While the sons of the king's Kshatriya wife were known as the Nandas, the son of his Shudra wife was known as Maurya. Maurya was valiant and noble. He commanded the king's army.



Maurya's son, the young Chandragupta, was as smart as brave. He surpassed his uncles the Nandas, not only in martial arts like riding, fencing and archery, but also in courage and knowledge.



King Sarwarthasiddhi died. Even at the time of his death he showed greater love for Maurya than for his other sons who were his heirs. This bred great jealousy in the heart of the Nandas.

Soon after the king's death the Nandas conspired against Maurya. At midnight his house was surrounded. At the point of swords he, his wife and all their sons were driven into a tower.



The round walls within which the Maurya family was imprisoned were high. Through a small opening, a servant of the Nandas gave them a little food and a little water, on which only one person could barely survive.

Inside the tower, the prisoners took a grim decision. If they divided the food and water among all of them, nobody will have enough to survive. Better only one lived to avenge the injustice. Their choice fell on Chandragupta.



The eldest of the Nandas ascended the throne of Magadha. Days passed. One day a messenger from the court of the King of Lanka brought a riddle to the King of Magadha. Nobody among the learned scholars in the court could explain the riddle.

One of the ministers whispered to the king, "Do you remember Chandragupta? He possessed a knack for solving problems and riddles. Why not bring him out of the prison for a day?" The idea appealed to the king.





The prison was opened. Chandragupta alone was alive. He saw sunlight after a full year. He was led into the palace and shaved and given a bath and good food and new clothes. He was then told the reason for his release.

He was led to the court. He read the riddle and in no time explained it. The courtiers who were feeling humiliated before the visitor from Lanka, now felt elated. They were all praise for Chandragupta.



The jubilant courtiers took Chandragupta out in a procession to his house which was lying deserted. Looking at the sudden popularity gained by him, the Nandas did not dare to imprison him again.

—To continue



"BUT..."

This happened long ago. In a village on the river lived an able-bodied young man named Harihar. There was a regular ferry service, carrying people to both the sides of the river. Harihar waited on the river-bank. He worked as a porter, carrying the luggage of the passengers up to the market where they found carriages for the town.

Harihar owned a small house of his own. His family consisted of his wife and a son. The ground around his house was fertile. Harihar's wife grew vegetables on it. What Harihar earned was enough to run the household. Even he succeeded in saving some money.

One day, as he sat on the river-bank waiting for the ferry to reach the shore, a roving

lunatic came closer to him and began babbling, "In the forest, near the deserted temple, there are ghosts. They know about buried wealth. So many times they have offered me those wealth. But..."

"But?" asked Harihar, curious to hear the rest.

"Shut up!" shouted the lunatic, "am I under your command that I must tell you everything? Why don't you go and see for yourself?"

The lunatic began calling Harihar names. Harihar did not mind his outbursts. But he grew curious about the buried wealth and the ghosts. Sometimes a mad man can speak out what a normal man would not. Who knows if the lunatic was not revealing a secret?

Harihar walked into the



forest when it was dark. It was a moonlit night. He found his way to the deserted temple. He saw a ghost swinging merrily, holding on to the branch of a banyan tree.

Harihar pretended not to have seen the ghost. He sat down under the tree and gave out a howl.

The ghost jumped down and stood before him and asked, "Hello, brother, why are you crying? Please tell me all. I cannot bear to see anybody sad."

Harihar narrated a number of imaginary tales of sorrow and said in conclusion, "I've no de-

sire to live any longer, for I am left with no money."

"So, all you want is money, right? Wait!" said the ghost and he ran away and in a minute returned with a pot which was made of gold and which was filled with gold coins too.

"Take this. I'm sure, this will solve all your problems," said the ghost handing over the pot to Harihar.

"I don't know how to thank you, brother ghost!" said Harihar in a choking voice, hardly able to contain his joy.

"Why should you thank me? I'm giving this to you for my own satisfaction. Did I not tell you that I cannot bear to see anybody sad?" said the ghost with a broad grin.

Harihar took leave of the ghost and began walking towards his home. He had taken only a few steps when two other ghosts came rushing to him. They looked into the pot he carried and one of them exclaimed, "How lucky is this chap! He got a potful of gold!"

The other ghost gave a shake to the pot. At once the gold pot turned into an earthen pot and the coins inside it turned into

worthless scraps.

Harihar was shocked. He looked back. But, his well-wisher ghost was not there. He returned home, disappointed.

He did not go to work the next day. With great anxiety he waited for the night to fall.

As soon as it was quite dark and all was quiet, he proceeded to the forest once again. He found his well-wisher ghost without much difficulty and told him how he had suffered at the hands of the two other ghosts.

"I see. Wait!" said the ghost with sympathy. He then ran away and returned with yet another gold pot, filled with

gold coins.

Harihar avoided the way he had taken the previous night and tried to come out of the forest through another route. But the other two ghosts found him out all right.

"The lucky fellow has got another treasure!" one of them yelled as both came running towards him.

"Treasure? Well, I don't see any unless by treasure you mean an owl!" said the other ghost.

Harihar was aghast to see that the pot he held turned into an owl. He screamed in horror and let go the owl. It screeched and flew away.





Harihar returned to the banyan tree, but did not see the donor ghost. He walked home sad and tired.

He spent the next day feeling extremely restless. At night he reached the banyan tree once again and located the well-wisher ghost. He reported to the ghost his plight at the hands of the other ghosts and said, "It is no good your giving me wealth. You must escort me till I cross the forest so that the other two ghosts cannot play mischief with me."

"The fact is, just that I cannot bear to see anybody unhappy, they cannot bear to see anybody

happy!" said the well-wisher ghost.

"That I understand. My question is, will you escort me till I cross the forest?" asked Harihar impatiently.

"How can I? If I do that, the other two ghosts will be terribly unhappy! I can't bear to see anybody unhappy!" said the ghost and he laughed loudly. Harihar heard the other two ghosts too laughing at some distance. He cursed himself and ran away. Back at home, he could not stop shedding tears over his foolishness. He now understood why the lunatic said 'but' so emphatically!

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THE KING AND THE SCHOLAR

The king of Chandragiri was on his death-bed. He was leaving behind him no immediate heir to succeed to the throne. He called his ministers and important courtiers to his bedside and said, "I want that someone capable of protecting the kingdom should be chosen to ascend the throne. I suggest that you hold a contest among the young men of the kingdom in all the martial arts. Let the one who proves to be the best become the king."

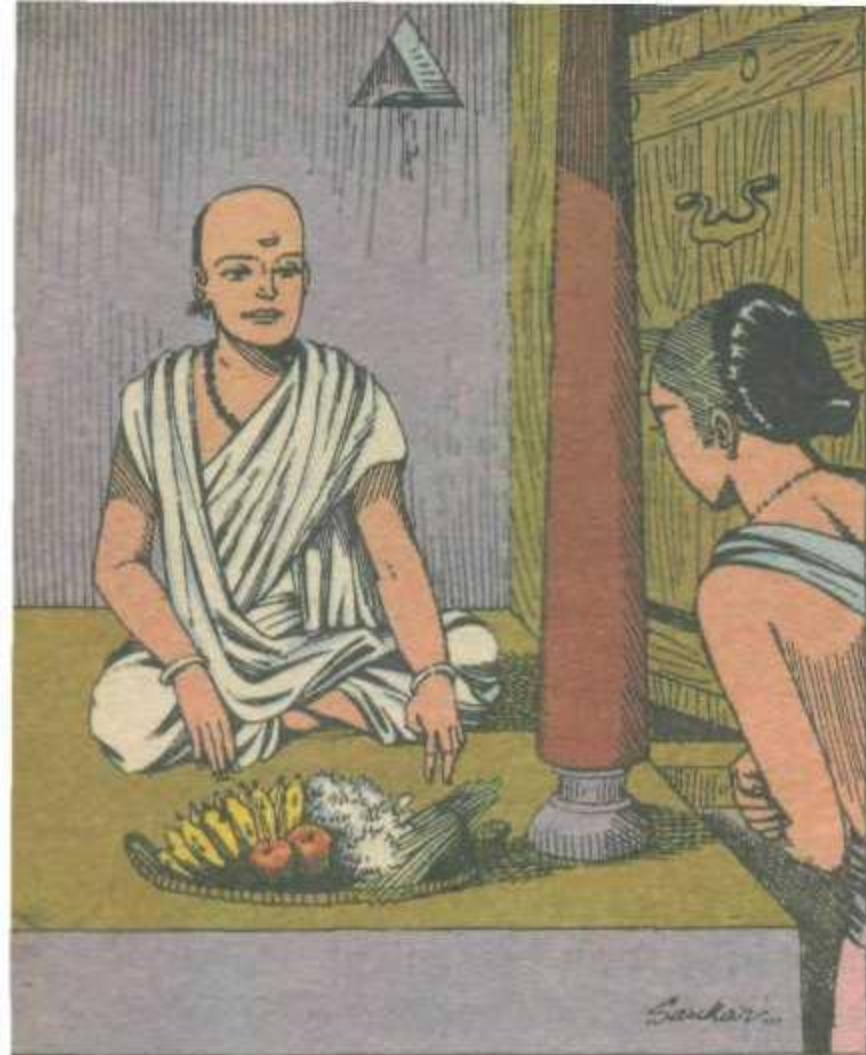
The king died soon after imparting this bit of advice. After his funeral was over, the ministers organised the contests in a systematic manner. The one to emerge most successful in every item was Jaidas. He now assumed the name Jayendra Bahadur Verma and ascended the throne.

The royal court of Chandragiri had a famous scholar named Pandit Pundarik Sharma. As the new king took seat in the court, he stood up and recited a verse composed in his honour. In the verse King Jayendra had been compared to Arjuna for his valour and to Harishchandra for his truthfulness.

Suddenly the young king laughed. Sharma stopped and asked, "My lord, did I say anything awkward that you laughed?"

"Tell me, Sharma, how did you become the court-scholar?" asked the new king.

"I was born in a family of scholars and poets. My grandfather was a member of the court of King Aditya of Visalpur. My father was a poet who taught poetics at Varanasi. I studied under a great scholar,



Vishweshwar Trivedi of Puri, for ten years. A letter from him to the former king got me this post," said Sharma.

The new king laughed. Then he said, "Ten years of study at Puri and many years of preparation prior to that made you the court-scholar. Only three years of practice in the martial art made me the king. Is it not amusing that you should compare me to Arjuna and Harishchandra? Are such comparisons not lies?"

Sharma became grave. He then said, "My lord, it is a custom to welcome a new king with such verses. There are two

reasons for such comparisons. First, a new king gets confidence from these verses. Second, it tells a wise king what we the people expect of him. My lord, chance can make one a king, but chance cannot make one a scholar. One has to study for many years in order to have knowledge of philosophy, scriptures and other such subjects."

It was clear that the courtiers and all the noblemen present in the court appreciated Sharma's arguments. That annoyed the new king. He burst out, saying, "Do you mean to say that a scholar is greater than a king?"

"My lord, as a man a king may be greater than a scholar and a scholar may be greater than a king. But scholarship is greater than kingship! I had to say this because you put the question point blank to me. It is said that a king is honoured only within his kingdom, but a scholar is honoured everywhere!"

"Enough!" shouted the king. "You must prove that a scholar is greater than a king, within a month. Otherwise you must leave Chandragiri to find honour elsewhere!"

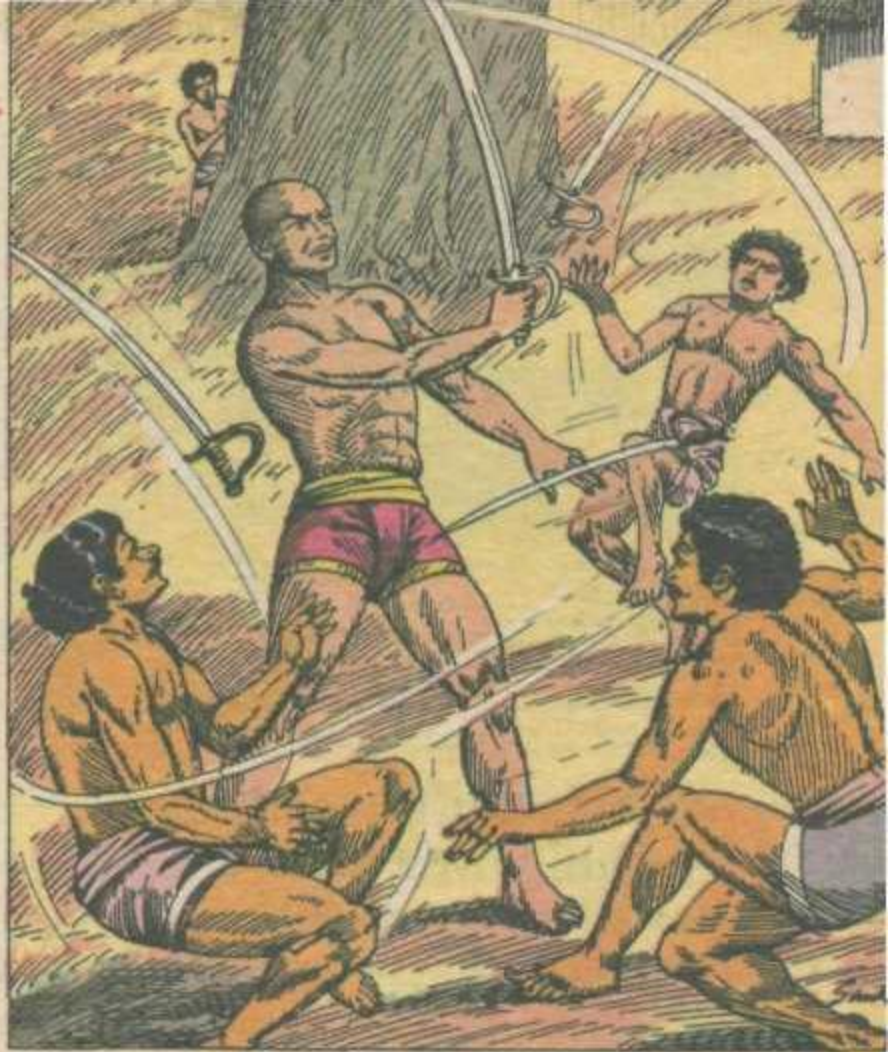
Sharma was going to say something more. But the king

waved impatiently and said, "I don't want to hear anything further. You need not attend the court until you have proved what you said!"

Sharma left the court. An uneasy silence prevailed in the atmosphere for sometime. Then other businesses of the day began.

Three weeks passed. One day there appeared a scholar from the court of Vikrampur. He had been accompanied by a minister of Vikrampur. The minister brought a message from his king: It said that if any scholar belonging to the court of Chandragiri can defeat the scholar from Vikrampur, then the king of Vikrampur will give away fifty villages to Chandragiri. If no scholar of Chandragiri can defeat the scholar from Vikrampur, then Chandragiri must become a vassal state of Vikrampur. There will be war if King Jayendra does not agree to this proposal!

The new king saw dark. Vikrampur was a powerful kingdom and its king was a whimsical man. King Jayendra asked the junior court scholars to argue with the visiting scholar. They tried their best, but failed miser-



ably.

King Jayendra sat depressed. His prime minister met him and said, "My lord, we are facing a crisis. This is no time to stand on any false prestige. You must invite Pundarik Sharma to take up the challenge."

The king sent for Sharma. He came and faced the visiting scholar, boldly. In the argument that followed, the visiting scholar admitted defeat. But Sharma said, "My friend, the question of victory and defeat is irrelevant in scholarly discussion. We have different points of view. That is all. Your admitting defeat only proves the noble trait



of humility in you.”

This moved the visiting scholar so deeply that he embraced Sharma.

After the visiting scholar's departure, King Jayendra descended from his throne and touched Sharma's feet and apologised to him. “You have proved that a scholar is greater than a king,” he said.

“My lord, it is only by chance

that I proved it. Had the scholar from Vikrampur not arrived, I would have silently left your kingdom after the period of a month. That is why, my request to you is to be patient and never to announce a decision in haste—particularly when the decision is harmful to somebody,” said Sharma.

“I realise it,” said the young king.

Ramu: What happened at the end of your fight with Mintoo?

Harish: Oh, Mintoo had to come crawling to me.

Ramu: Really? That is great! What did he say?

Harish kept silent. A third friend, Vijay came in just then.

Vijay: I know what Mintoo said to Harish. He said, “Come out from under the bed, you coward!”



GIFT OF THE GAB

Suhasini Rao of Guntur and Alope Sen of Puri want to know what is *extempore* and what the phrase *gift of the gab* means, respectively. It is a coincidence that the two queries are related to each other. People endowed with the gift of the gab are the people who can or who should dare to speak extempore!

Extempore (adverb) means on the spur of the moment or inspired and generally it relates to speeches. "He spoke extempore; still he impressed all." Here what is meant is, the speaker had not come prepared with a speech; he brought no notes. He spoke from his ready knowledge of the subject.

But, even if one has much knowledge of a subject, one may not be able to impress an audience. One must possess the gift of the gab or the talent for speaking in an interesting manner. Only then he can hold the interest of the audience till the end.

Don't ask me what *gab* means! Nobody knows. Probably *gab* is a variant of *gob* which is a slang for mouth.





Was there any great dramatist in India before Kalidasa? What is his major work?

—Sumitra Das, Kharagpur.

Yes, there were probably a number of great dramatists before Kalidasa. The greatest of them, so far as we have known till today, was Bhasa. Kalidasa pays tribute to him.

But his plays had been taken as lost to humanity forever. No manuscript of any of his plays, including *Swapnavasavadutta* (Vasavadutta of dreams) was found anywhere. As northern India was repeatedly invaded by vandals who destroyed as much as they plundered, many important manuscripts, generally preserved in rooms adjoining temples, were destroyed.

It is only in 1912 that a renowned scholar, Pundit Ganapati Shastri, discovered a bunch of thirteen manuscripts in Kerala. The bunch included *Swapnavasavadutta*. The style of the plays suggest that they were by a single author. Since we know that *Swapnavasavadutta* was by Bhasa, there is little doubt that the other twelve plays in the bunch also are by him.

How did Bharatanatyam get its name since it seemed to have been confined to only the southern part of Bharata (India)?

—Karuna S., Hubli

The dance form got its name from Sage Bharata, the author of the celebrated work, *Natyashastra*. He codified this dance form.

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M. Natarajan



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PICKS FROM THE WISE

To be good only to yourself is to be good for nothing

—Voltaire

Every country has the government it deserves.

—Joseph De Maistre

Gratitude is the memory of the heart.

—J.B. Massieu

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RAM & SHYAM

in Encounters With An Alien

PARLE

AS RAM & SHYAM TAKE A WALK ON A DESERTED BEACH, THE SKY SUDDENLY LIGHTS UP.



THEY SEE A HUGE BALL, LANDING FAR ON THE BEACH.



WOW! THAT LOOKS LIKE A SPACESHIP!

AS THEY APPROACH IT, THE SPACESHIP TAKES OFF AT JET SPEED AND IMMEDIATELY THEY HEAR A STRANGE SOUND BEHIND THE BUSHES.



WHAT THEY SEE ASTOUNDS THEM.



HE LOOKS LIKE AN ALIEN!

AND HE'S FRIGHTENED.

LET'S KEEP HIM AS OUR PET.



WE'LL CALL HIM OP. LET'S GIVE HIM SOME POPPINS.

UNSURE IF THE ALIEN WOULD HARM THEM, THEY KEEP THE POPPINS SWEETS ON THE GROUND AND WATCH HIS REACTION.



OP SLOWLY COMES CLOSER TO THE POPPINS SWEETS, PICKS ONE AND EATS IT. LOVES IT. ONE BY ONE HE FINISHES THEM ALL.



TO RAM & SHYAM'S SURPRISE, THIS INTELLIGENT ALIEN ACTUALLY COMES FORWARD AND SHAKES HANDS WITH THEM.



OP WE'RE SO GLAD WE CAN BE FRIENDS!

Uckable Likeable Lovable

PARLE
POPPINS

